

VZCZCXR07347

PP RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR

DE RUEHMO #0267/01 0321457

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

P 011457Z FEB 08

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6373

INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 000267

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/22/2017

TAGS: PREL PARM MARR PL RS

SUBJECT: POLISH FM SIKORSKI PREPARES FOR TUSK VISIT TO MOSCOW

Classified By: Ambassador William J. Burns for reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Polish FM Sikorski visited Moscow January 21 in preparation for Prime Minister Tusk's February 8 consultations. No new ground was broken in discussions with FM Lavrov on missile defense; the GOR reiterated that it had no "veto" power over Poland's cooperation with the U.S., with Sikorski privately stressing that Poland's security needs had to be guaranteed before America's could be addressed. Russia was pleased to hear that Poland intended to lift its hold on PCA negotiations during the February 18 GAERC. Although wary, Poland is considering a GOR proposal to ease the transit for Polish troops to Afghanistan, in exchange for easing restrictions on Russian military rotations to Kaliningrad. Sikorski also met with Russian opposition leader, former PM Kasyanov, as a sign of continued "skepticism" about the bilateral relationship. End Summary.

Preparation for Tusk Visit

---

¶2. (C) Polish FM Sikorski came to Moscow January 21 to prepare for the February 8 visit of Polish President Tusk. MFA Poland Section Chief Tkachyev told us on January 25 that Tusk's efforts to reach out to Russia had generated a positive response from the GOR. He emphasized that after a period of shaky relations, ties were developing step by step, and that Russia was satisfied with the atmosphere of the relationship. Sikorski and Lavrov discussed a wide range of bilateral and multilateral issues that would be raised during Tusk's visit, including missile defense, Polish meat and dairy imports to Russia, NATO-Russia Council, the CFE Treaty, trade and investment, navigation arrangements in Kaliningrad, and visa facilitation. They agreed to resume the work of the Intergovernmental Commission on Economic and Trade Cooperation, and to step up the work of the Public Forum in both countries.

Missile Defense

---

¶3. (C) According to Tkachyev, there were no new proposals from either side during Sikorski's visit on missile defense, with talks focused on comparing notes on the Iranian threat and hewing to discussions between Sikorski and Kislyak in Warsaw on January 10. Polish diplomats told us that Sikorski privately stressed to Lavrov that Poland's national security must be guaranteed before U.S. security concerns could be addressed. In reference to recent comments by Russian Chief of the Armed Forces Baluyevskiy that Russia should not be afraid to use its nuclear deterrent when negotiating on MD, Sikorski half-jokingly commented during his press conference with Lavrov that "Poland would be grateful if it is threatened by nuclear war not more often than once every third month."

¶4. (C) Tkachyev echoed Lavrov's public statement that

"Russia has no veto power" on Poland's decisions and told us Russia acknowledges and expects Poland to ensure its own national security first. Although Tkachyov stressed that Russia wanted Poland to understand its concerns on MD, the GOR was satisfied with the status of current talks between the two countries. However, as long as there was no agreement between Poland and the U.S., he said, there was room for negotiation between Russia and Poland, and Russia was willing to consider the full breadth of options.

PCA Negotiations

-----

¶ 15. (C) Tkachyev said that Russia was appreciative of Poland's efforts to find a "technical solution to a technical problem" on the problem over imported Polish meat, and not treat it as a political crisis. He credited Tusk's government for the productive change in policy. Polish diplomats confirmed that a "mutually acceptable solution" had been found regarding Polish meat and dairy imports to Russia, and told us that Poland intended to lift its veto of new PCA negotiations at the February 18 GAERC.

Military Transit

-----

¶ 16. (C) Lavrov proposed a deal that would allow Polish troops and equipment to transit Russia to Afghanistan more easily, in return for the same rights for Russian troops and equipment headed to Kaliningrad. Polish diplomats told us that Poland would consider the offer, but was wary.

Poland Strikes a Balance

-----

MOSCOW 00000267 002 OF 002

¶ 17. (C) Polish diplomats agreed with Tkachyov's general assessment that Sikorski's trip was "productive," and added that both Sikorski and the GOR came to the table ready to engage on problems. They stressed that Sikorski's meeting with former Prime Minister and opposition leader Mikhail Kasyanov was meant as a signal to the GOR that Poland would retain skepticism about the bilateral relationship, and noted that Sikorski's laying of a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was followed by a similar ceremony at a monument to victims of Stalin's regime.

BURNS